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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 PARIS 001638

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FOR THE SECRETARY FROM AMBASSADOR RIVKIN

EO 12958 DECL: 12/04/2019  
TAGS PREL, PGOV, FR  
SUBJECT: PRESIDENT SARKOZY: THE KEY DECISION-MAKER WHO CAN  
BE A FORCE MULTIPLIER ON GLOBAL ISSUES  
REF: A. PARIS 1588 B. PARIS 1589 C. PARIS 1521

Classified By: Ambassador Charles Rivkin for reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

1. (C/NF) Summary. At the mid-point of his five-year term, French President Sarkozy continues to be the dominant, virtually unchallenged, poli

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DOMESTIC DRAMA BUT NO DOMESTIC OPPOSITION  
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2. (C/NF) Sarkozy's domestic standing is virtually unchallenged despite lagging opinion polls which place his personal approval ratings at 39

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FOREIGN POLICY SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES  
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3. (C/NF) The net result of Sarkozy's dominance of the domestic political scene is that he is also one of the most secure leaders in Europe, w  
PARIS 00001638 002 OF 004  
coordinated tandem that drives much of European policy. Likewise, he will frequently pair with Merkel and UK PM Brown to add needed clout to me

4. (C/NF) Sarkozy's most visible successes to date are largely in the foreign affairs domain, with his greatest achievements within Europe. He

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NEW PARTNERS, NEW IDEAS  
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5. (C/NF) In a departure from previous French leaders, Sarkozy has also devoted a great deal of effort to reaching out bilaterally to countrie

6. (C/NF) Sarkozy is most prone to disappoint when, in his impatience for action, he effectively "gets ahead" of other key players and his owr  
PARIS 00001638 003 OF 004

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NO ONE TO SAY "NO"  
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7. (C/NF) Sarkozy has few restraints -- political, personal or ideological -- to act as a brake on his global ambitions. Domestically, he rewa

8. (C/NF) Sarkozy's own advisors likewise demonstrate little independence and appear to have little effect on curbing the hyperactive presiden

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WORKING TOGETHER IN THE FUTURE  
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9. (C/NF) When he was elected in 2007, Sarkozy was among the first French leaders to openly embrace the United States, despite a U.S. administ

10. (C/NF) On strategic questions, Paris is frequently willing to back U.S. positions, even in the face of general European reluctance. Paris

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AFGHANISTAN: AN ILLUSTRATIVE CASE  
PARIS 00001638 004 OF 004  
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11. (C/NF) Our effort to secure increased French contributions to Afghanistan underlines how much decision-making power is vested in the Frenc

12. (C/NF) However, following a direct conversation with President Obama, President Sarkozy dropped the formerly firm "no" position and moved

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COMMENT  
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13. (C/NF) Comment: As one of Europe's most politically secure leaders at the head of a country with significant ability to contribute more to